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ABSTRACT

School change is not the rational deliberate process that some people might believe it is. One of the realities of schooling is that teachers possess their own theories about what they do, and about what is reasonable, feasible, and possible in classroom teaching. This is invariably knowledge based upon 'lived experiences,' rather than on the wisdom of the outside 'experts.' Far too little regard seems to have been paid in the past by school authorities to workable ways in which teachers can and do use colleagues as important and valued resource persons. Recent studies suggest that teachers do learn from their individual and collective experiences, and that they are able to share their expertise among themselves when they engage in "frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice." The idea of teachers acting in critical, reflective, and responsive ways in their classroom practice is gaining increasing acceptance as teachers begin to see the inherent possibilities in developing shared or collaborative frameworks of meaning about teaching. In the current context of the move towards teachers acquiring increasing control over their own classroom practice, clinical supervision is increasingly being seen as a viable means. The non-evaluative and genuinely collaborative intent of clinical supervision enables teachers, working together in a consultative relationship, to gain data-based insights. (JMK)

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TEACHERS AS COLLABORATIVE LEARNERS IN CLINICAL SUPERVISION: A STATE OF THE ART REVIEW

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Introduction

The question of how to bring about lasting, significant and meaningful change in schools is one of the most enduring, confusing and perplexing issues currently confronting us. Seemingly endless amounts of money, time and effort have been invested in tackling the question from a planned, rational change perspective of developing research agendas, pursuing answers to those research questions, and then disseminating and implementing policy based on those findings.

This paper argues that schools are not tidy rational organisations, and that change is an ad hoc piecemeal process. Because of the unique culture of schools, there are severe impediments to the way teachers respond to supposedly rational change processes orchestrated from outside. The argument developed here is that teachers' own interpretations and theories about what works in classrooms, can and should constitute the basis of change strategies in schools. In themselves, teachers have the capacity to engage in practical reflection (Elliott, 1976a) through the development of collaborative alliances that not only enrich their sense of what is feasible and possible, but has the potential to transform as well their understanding of those realities. In initiating and carrying out this process of critical reflection about their own teaching, teachers clearly require various forms of assistance. The suggestion offered here is that one important way in which this might occur is through the provision of a paradigm, in this case the Cogan (1973)/Goldhammer (1969) notion of "clinical supervision".

The rational, planned or linear model of how to implement change has suffered largely because, as Carnine (1981) has noted, "Those most interested in improving school practices often lack a healthy respect for hidden

impediments" (p. 23). It is not that there is any lack of knowledge about what should be done; rather, it has to do with a failure to appreciate the enormous chasm between knowing something, and being able to initiate action. By way of illustration, Carnine cites from Gilbert (1979) who was engaged as a consultant to the Army during the Korean War to train soldiers in ways of avoiding trenchfoot and frostbite - greater sources of casualties than gunshot wounds:

> I did my eager best to develop the finest six hour course possible, but I soon saw that something was wrong. The entire subject matter could be stated in a single sentence: "Keep Your Socks Dry!" For the first time I saw the difference between deficiencies of knowledge and deficiencies of execution. Even after watching movies of toes falling off, soldiers simply wouldn't go to the trouble to keep their socks dry. (p. 23)

The message, I think, is clear enough: the factors that inhibit change in schools are pervasive, deep-seated and embedded in the nature of schools and classrooms as workplaces. If we are to make any in-roads into the problem of bringing about change in the direction of improving the quality of what occurs in classrooms, it will have to be as a consequence of peeling back the layers and uncovering those deeply ingrained impediments to change. Some significant work has already been done along these lines (Jackson, 1968; Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1971; Lieberman & Miller, 1979, 1982).

The kind of realities of teaching that Lieberman and others allude to are both sensible and "grounded" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in teachers' own conceptions, experiences and theories about teaching. Indeed, the picture that emerges is one in which there is considerable tension between the way teachers experience schooling, and the way policy makers and others perceive that reality. For instance, Lieberman (1982) portrays an inherent tension in the teacher's need to continually move back and forth between a concern for the idiosyncracies of pupils, while attending to and acknowledging the

existence of group norms in classrooms. In this process of vacillation, teachers have to continually accommodate to the need for rules and regulations, in the knowledge that these stifle individualisation and innovation. Although they are self-confessed pragmatists whose work styles are characterised by concerns for practicality and immediacy, teachers have to daily contend with community expectations and demands that take no account of the ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding much of what transpires in life in classrooms. In its crudest form, to the outsider, "All you have to do is teach those kids" (Lieberman, 1982, p. 256). Outsiders fail to appreciate the highly personalised artistic nature of teaching, the endemic uncertainty of the linkage between teaching and learning in the absence of an established knowledge base, and the absence of goal specificity. There is also an insensitivity to the fact that control of classroom norms is a matter of survival, in a context characterised by isolation, and in an absence of a strong professional culture based on shared experiences.

While it is certainly true that schools have a bureaucratic face, and that there are therefore grounds to regard them as rational, there is also the often hasty presumption that what appears rational and logical can become the basis for action. Wise (1977) has described as the "hyper-rationalization hypothesis" the tendency by policy makers to formulate and implement change on the presumption that schools are rational ordered organisations. He adds that:

> What appears logical may or may not have a connection to reality. Where the connection to reality is absent, a policy intervention will fail. (p. 44)

Surveying the literature Wise points to a marked disjuncture between the rational model and school reality, concluding that:

> the rational model does not seem to have become the dominant framework for teachers' discourse on teaching, schooling and education (p. 50).

At the level of individual teachers and classrooms, Floden & Feiman (1980) argue that the answer does not lie either in simply exhorting teachers to act in "more rational ways" (whatever that means!). Considered in context, teachers and the theories they hold about what they do, why and with what effects, may be eminently reasonable and perfectly rational:

> Although teachers do not engage in conscious and systematic deliberation, they still have good ways of thinking about what they are doing, even if those ways do not approximate the a priori models. Teachers develop heuristic strategies for dealing with the fast-moving complexity of the classroom; some of these shortcuts are better than others. Teachers are rational in their actions, not as defined by a priori models of action, but as defined by choosing appropriate means to reach their goals. (p. 3)

One of the lines of argument I wish to pursue in the remainder of this paper is that changes most likely to succeed acknowledge the practicality and immediacy of classroom issues, by starting from where teachers are at in their understanding of themselves, paying due regard to their own histories and their particular work contexts. One of the important realities we need to seriously attend to is the way teachers learn. There is evidence that teachers don't learn, by and large, from scholarly journals (Little, 1982), research reports (Stenhouse, 1978), or even pre-service courses (Hogben, 1980). Rather, they seem to be influenced most by precept and example, especially role models held of their own teachers. Research on adult learning (Knowles, 1978; Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1980; Bents & Howey, 1980) suggests that adults learn in situations where they are provided with an opportunity for continuous guided reflection, based on "lived experiences". Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1980) believe that even though the research on adult development is still in the formative stages, the type of explanatory framework necessary may well develop out of practice. After all, they argue,

since theory and practice are really different sides of the same coin, valid theory can be derived from careful and systematic analysis of practice. Analysis of their own research and practice led them to suggest a number of elements as being important in adult learning:

1. Role taking experience: This involves the performance in a direct and active way in situations involving new and more complex interpersonal tasks. For example, teachers may act as observers and counsellors for each other, or demonstrate to colleagues new teaching models or methods.
2. Qualitative aspect of role taking: Recognition is given to the capacities of individuals and the complexity of new tasks and roles. There needs to be a matching of experential background and new role expectations.
3. Guided reflection: This acknowledges the importance of not only providing adults with new and real experiences, but also the need to assist them in making sense of those new experiences. Educational institutions are generally notoriously bad at teaching people to do this.
4. Continuity: Brief, episodic learning encounters as experienced in one-shot professional days are ineffective in facilitating change. Periods considerably in excess of one year are necessary.
5. Personal support and challenge: Giving up old habits is a painful process, a bit like 'grieving'. During the transition phase where old behaviour is being replaced, careful and continuous support is necessary.

On the basis of what we currently know about adult learning, Willie and Howey (1981) present a convincing argument that the cornerstone of effective staff development should be a knowledge and understanding of adult development, and that this should be reflected in the in-service education of teachers. They argue that as adults mature there is an increasing life-time search for intimacy -- a search for relationships in which one individual is able to confide in another, talk about self, and disclose problems without

fear of threat or recrimination. Willie and Howey argue that the nature of human relationships and issues of reciprocity and trust should lie at the very heart of what teachers do among themselves as professionals. Unfortunately '... most of what we currently refer to as in-service is characterized by sterility and lack of personalization' (p. 38). What is required instead is that small groups of teachers, who trust each other, work together on an extended basis to deepen that sense of trust and respect by providing each other with 'accurate, precise, and humane feedback about their behaviour in the classroom' (p. 38).

A second central aspect is adult interaction with life's work. Willie and Howey stress the importance of self-esteem in the workplace. They note, however, that the diminished status of teachers brought about by unreal public expectations, has been met by a form of in-service education that assumes a reactive, teacher deficit stance, with the teacher being viewed as some kind of 'reservoir of techniques and in-service as an additive process through which the number of techniques is increased' (p. 41).

A third element in adult development, according to Willie and Howey, is the quest for meaning. All adults, in varying degrees, seek to uncover purpose or meaning in what they do. The extent to which individuals are introspective about life generally and the world they inhabit, holds important implications for the way they work and the satisfaction derived from it.

The implicit assumption is that adults, and indeed teachers, learn by doing and benefit most from those activities that combine action and reflection. Although this revelation comes as no surprise to those who have worked closely with teachers in their own contexts, it is comforting to note as Berlak and Berlak (1981) do, that: "We have some evidence that teachers

learn their craft largely from one another" (p. 246). Summarising some of the work that has been done, Blumberg (1980) claims:

> ... the number of times teachers call upon one another for help or assistance far outweighs the number of times they call upon their formal supervisors or consultants (p. 231)

He suggests that this provides a valuable, albeit often overlooked, potential for a range of natural forms of teacher socialisation:

> Teachers who interact with their peers learn and practice many of the inter-personal skills and develop the repertoire of tactics they are likely to require for effective supervision. This informal learning situation can present them with the opportunity to engage in the process of identity bargaining, so necessary to developing a working consensus conducive to helping another teacher ... to develop a capacity for empathy ... to acquire a sensitivity to knowing which lines of action are most appropriate for a given interpersonal situation; and to become more skilled at employing the interpersonal skills needed to develop a mutual definition of the situation that facilities one teacher's ability to influence another. (p. 231)

Galloway and Mulhern (1973) carry this point even further by arguing that for far too long school authorities have undersold the potential of teachers as a valued resource for each other in learning about teaching, and in fact by their inaction have unwittingly endorsed a policy of secrecy and defensiveness among teachers. Alfonso and Goldsberry (1982) claim that failing to acknowledge the reality of teachers using each other as resource persons even in the absence of well articulated and endorsed strategies, is paramount to denying teachers the opportunity to develop professionally. In their words:

> Colleagueship among teachers is typically ignored and often inhibited, by the school's formal organization; consequently, teachers are frequently isolated from their colleagues. This isolation, combined with the dearth of supervisory support, drastically impedes the professional development of even the most conscientious and dedicated teachers. Despite a paucity of research, evidence indicates that systems of intervisitation or colleague consultation seem promising and valued by teachers ... It is clear that if supervision is to be improved, its base must be broadened. It is simply not possible for those who carry the formal title of supervisor to have any direct impact on large numbers of teachers. (p. 106)

There does in fact seem to be some empirical support for these claims. A survey of the research on staff development, so far as it applies to teaching, reached similar conclusions. Joyce and Showers (1980) analysis of 200 studies found five consistent themes characterising programs that were "effective":

1. presentation of theory or description of skill strategy;
2. modelling or demonstration of skills or models of teaching;
3. practice in simulated and real classroom settings;
4. structured and open-ended feedback;
5. coaching for application (hands-on, in-class assistance with transfer of skills and strategies).

Despite experiencing difficulty in reviewing the actual research on teacher development because of the lack of rigor for what passed as 'research', Joyce and Showers (1980) made two important points from their survey of the research. Firstly, teachers can be taught new skills and assisted in fine tuning their classroom competencies; and secondly, for this to actually occur it is necessary that a number of distinct elements be present in any staff development strategy. They found, for example, a compelling case for the actual presentation of a theoretical component or the description of a skill strategy for teachers. It was necessary that this be accompanied by a modelling or demonstration of the skill or teaching strategy, followed by extensive practice by teachers in actual classrooms. Above all, they found a need for teachers to be assisted in making the transfer of skills to the classroom situation, especially through the use of structured and open-ended feedback about the in-class performance of the strategies being trialled.

Having established along similar lines that the school site should be the focus of interest, McNergney and Carrier (1981) have used Hunt's (1975) research to emphasise the crucial importance of the context in which teachers' development occurs -- the specific school, the specific classroom, the specific concerns of the teacher, and the specific relationships among the

people involved. Highlighting the functional importance of teachers in their own development, McNergney and Carrier propose a personalised teacher development model which recognises the specific needs and abilities of teachers and acknowledges the interactive effects of teacher characteristics, teaching behaviour, learning tasks and learning environments. Their model is developmental in that teacher growth is considered to occur over time, with a predominant focus on contemporaneous issues, or those of interest and immediacy to teachers. Above all, their model stresses practicality so that the lives of students and teachers within classrooms can be enriched, and reciprocity, or the process of teachers assisting each other to identify individual strengths and limitations.

A recently completed study by Little (1982) concluded that while the common sense notion that people learn by experience is hardly new, much less is known about how this occurs. Little found that continuous job-embedded professional development was most likely to occur when:

> teachers engage in frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice (as distinct from teacher characteristics and failings, the social lives of teachers, the foibles and failures of students and their families, and the unfortunate demands of society on the school). By such talk, teachers build up a shared language adequate to the complexity of teaching, capable of distinguishing one practice and its virtues from another, and capable of integrating large bodies of practice into distinct and sensible perspectives on the business of teaching. Other things being equal, the utility of collegial work and the vigor of experimentation with teaching is a direct function of the concreteness, precision, and coherence of the shared language (p. 331)

Teachers-as-critical-inquirers

The notion of teachers being critical, reflective and responsive to their own and each others' teaching, is not new. Problematic since the writings of Dewey (1933), have been feasible ways of actualy doing this. There are a plethora of apparently plausible reasons why teachers do not engage in systematic analysis of their teaching - the isolated nature of classrooms, the complexity of classroom life, inadequate time, a lack of observational prowess, anxiety at having their teaching observed, as well as a belief in the craft-like nature of teaching learned largely on the job by processes of trial and error. This reticence on the part of teachers, has been aided and abetted by an educational system that believes standards of teaching should be ensured through externally imposed minimum standards and mechanisms of inspection, accountability and quality control.

That some researchers have been less than charitable in speaking of teachers' self-monitoring capacities, is evident in comments by writers such as Jackson (1968) and Lortie (1975). Berlak and Berlak (1981) indicate that educational scholars like Lortie and Jackson do not appear unsympathetic to teachers, yet their comments about teachers' "... conceptual simplicity", "... avoidance of elaborate language", their "... uncomplicated view of causality", their "... unquestioning acceptance of classroom miracles", and their "... intuitive, rather than a rational, approach to classroom events", sound suspiciously like a hegemony in which a low-status group (i.e., teachers) are subordinated and dominated by others (i.e., researchers and administrators). Like Berlak and Berlak (1981), I reject the notion that:

> the experts in teaching are not the teachers but scientifically-trained administrators, or educational scholars who study schooling scientifically. (p. 235)

The idea that teachers are capable only of dispensing the "soft human virtues of patience, understanding and idealism" (p. 235), and are incapable of rigorous and disciplined thinking about their own teaching, appears to me to be an attitude bordering upon the arrogant. As Elliott (1976a) noted:

> The fact that any genuine accountability system embodies the view that teachers are able to identify and diagnose practical problems objectively is very important because it indicates a respect for the teacher as an autonomous person who is capable of improving his own performance in the light of reflection. The fact that this view is not implicit in many current accountability systems is indicative of the low esteem in which teachers are held. (p. 55)

For my own part, I would prefer to interpret any past reticence among teachers toward being reflective and analytic, as signs of the complexity of the process and the absence of clearly articulated paradigms and frameworks within which to undertake the task. Naturalistic research by MacKay and Marland (1978) has underscored the contribution of the classroom context:

> Classrooms and classroom activities did not provide reflecting surfaces which enabled teachers to 'see themselves' at work. The evidence in this study seems to support the notion that the classroom scene, which presents to the teacher's senses, such a rapidly changing kaleidoscope of events, prevents the teacher from seeing a clear and stable image of himself. (p. 15)

Working towards the concept of "teachers-as-reflective spectators" in their own classrooms, Beasley (1981) arrived at a similar conclusion:

> ... because of the complexity of their situation, the end result (of observing their own practice) may have an amorphous quality that makes reflecting on what has occurred very difficult. Teachers and students may at the end of a lesson, for example, have a feeling that it went well or badly but discussing why this was so may remain largely at the level of intuition. (p. 9)

Rather than being despondent because teachers have not acted reflectively in the past, I would prefer to speculate about some genuinely productive possibilities and prospects for the future that may help teachers gain greater control over their own teaching.

When teachers themselves adopt a reflective attitude towards their teaching, actually questioning their own practices (Holly, 1982), then they engage in a process of rendering problematic or questionable those aspects of teaching generally taken for granted. Dewey (1933) claimed that to be reflective was to look back over past experiences, extract their net meanings, and in the process acquire a guide for future encounters of a similar kind. Implicit in Dewey's view was an open-mindedness towards the acceptance of facts from multiple perspectives, a willingness to consider the possibility of alternative (even competing) realities, and the realisation that cherished beliefs and practices may have to be challenged and even supplanted. Elliott (1976b) expressed it somewhat differently when he said:

> changes in classroom practice can be brought about only if teachers become conscious of ... theories and are able to critically reflect about them. Teachers would then be encouraged to reflect about the theories implicit in their own practices and cease to regard them as self-evident. (p. 2)

Put simply, to act reflectively about teaching is to actively pursue the possibility that existing practices may effectively be challenged, and in the light of evidence about their efficacy, replaced by alternatives. Reflection, critical awareness or enlightenment on its own is insufficient - it must be accompanied by 'action'. As Benseman (1978) cryptically noted: "Reflection without action is <u>verbalism</u>; action without reflection is <u>activism</u> ..." (p. 35). The intent is that teachers reach a point where "... the teaching act itself (is seen) as a source of knowledge" (Devaney, 1977, p. 21).

Clinical supervision as a 'modus operandi'

Viewed in the context of strategies that actively seek to understand and actually improve teaching and the quality of classroom life, the rationale, principles and practices of clinical supervision are something of an enigma. The seminal works on this topic by Goldhammer (1969) and Cogan (1973) espouse colleagiality and collaboration as major cornerstones of any strategy likely to succeed in improving teaching. Their argument is that if you want teachers to change then it is necessary to work with them, rather than on them!

Much of the reported literature and research on clinical supervision in the thirty years since the Harvard group initiated the concept, has continually emphasised the collaborative and colleagial aspects, albeit within the traditional supervisory framework of teaching being 'supervised' by a more experienced non-teaching colleague. I must admit to having some fundamental reservations about this particular interpretation of what colleagiality means. While hierarchical status on its own is obviously not a hallmark of repression and does not necessarily signify the existence of an exploitative relationship, the possibility nevertheless still exists for one party to effectively oppress and disenfranchise the other. Whether this occurs deliberately or not, it is nevertheless argued as being for the betterment of teaching! Use of unbridled power in this way to legitimate the interests of those in ascendant and dominant positions, is hardly consistent with the essence of colleagiality and collaboration. While I am not suggesting that clinical supervision has been used in this way as some kind of sophisticated teacher surveillance technique (Snyder, 1980), we need to be consistently sensitive to the possibility that this might occur. For me, at least, colleagiality refers to the genuinely non-threatening state of mind that exists between teachers who are prepared to assist each other in arriving at a

joint understanding of their own and each others' teaching. In other words, the development of a shared framework of meaning about teaching (Smyth, 1983a).

Although I am still unconvinced about the argument of "skilled service" (Garman, 1982) as a justification for having administrators and others supervising teachers in formative ways, I must admit to feeling less uncomfortable about those type of arrangements when due process occurs. By that I mean, full and open negotiation between partners of unequal status about the intended clinical supervision arrangements.

Under these conditions clinical supervision is probably something of a misnomer; given its non-evaluative and formative intent it is perhaps more aptly described as a form of "colleague consultation" (Goldsberry, 1981) that employs the rationale and stages of the Goldhammer/Cogan cycle. Like Roper, Deal & Dornbusch (1976), my own research (Smyth, Henry, Marcus, Logan & Meadows, 1982) emphasises the belief that participant teachers should have an unrestrained opportunity to select the partner they wish to work with using the clinical model, as well as the issues to be explored. To operate otherwise, either by forcing the process upon teachers or by selecting the colleague they must work with or the object of observation, undermines the very basis of the trustful collaborative relationship central to this mode of analysing teaching. Even more than that, if the colleagial relationship is to mean what it says, then there must also be an overt demonstration of reciprocation between partners, with the teaching of each being observed by the other. Unless this occurs then clinical supervision rapidly becomes a process that is done to certain categories of teachers (i.e., inexperienced or weak teachers). Construed in that light, colleagiality becomes tarnished. Colleagiality in action as embodied in Goldhammer and Cogan's terms really means a preparedness to have done to you, what you would do to another. It

implies as well a commitment to doing a careful and thorough job. As Roper, Deal & Dornbusch (1976) found:

> If the observer was attentive and carefully reported observations to his or her partner, and if the feedback was complete and honest - then the improvement plan generated by the pair was a thoughtful and practical blueprint for professional growth (p. 66)

In recent times there has been an encouraging growth in field-based studies that focus upon in-class observation and analysis by teachers of their own and each others' teaching (Smyth, 1982a). This is possibly in part attributed to a growing realisation by school practitioners that they <u>can</u> participate as full, active and purposeful agents in the improvement of their professional lives. They are no longer totally dependent on the goodwill and resources of outside experts. It has to do as well with the fact that research on teaching has revealed that there <u>are</u> classroom and teacher behaviour variables that not only make a difference to pupil learning, but that are also controllable (Bloom, 1980; Denham & Lieberman, 1980; Berliner, 1980) by teachers themselves especially if they adopt deliberate measures to monitor what occurs in their classrooms. Some of this enhanced activity has involved teachers in becoming more deliberately reflective and analytic about their teaching through a variety of supportive 'action research' projects (Nixon, 1981; Holly, 1982; Little, 1982; Beasley, 1981; Borthwick, 1982).

As well, there has been an upsurge in interest among teachers choosing to specifically take up and use the Cogan/Goldhammer model of clinical supervision in a non-hierarchical manner. Cogan (1973) summarised the possibilities for developing insights and understandings when he said:

> the teacher should ... not only learn new behavior but he should understand why he does what he does and why it is better or worse than other things he might do. (p. 30)

A recent project aimed at developing a research basis for the in-service education of secondary teachers incorporated peer observation using clinical supervision, and concluded that this element was a "resounding success" (Mohlman, Kierstead & Gundlach, 1982). Teachers were enthusiastic in their sharing of ideas derived from observation of each others' teaching. A similar finding has been made by myself and colleagues. One of the experienced teachers we worked with summed it up when she said of her involvement in clinical supervision:

> it was gratifying to me to find another staff member who was willing to work in partnership with me, and help me in my professional development, and allowing me to participate in a similar manner (Smyth, 1983b, p. 18)

The idea of teachers as clinical inquirers in their own classrooms (Smyth, 1982a) has a good deal more currency today than a few years ago (Alfonso, 1977). From pessimism about the possibility of peer supervision, albeit still "a disturbingly slippery concept" (Alfonso, 1977, p. 595), we seem to have reached the point where teachers are finding it both a workable practice (Goldsberry, 1980; Smyth, Henry & Martin, 1982) as well as a salutory experience (McCoombe, 1980; Robinson, 1982). They are sufficiently convinced of the value of their 'lived experiences' while experimenting with clinical supervision, as to actually commit themselves to writing about those experiences for the benefit of other teachers (Beasley & Riordan, 1981; Beasley, 1981).

Notwithstanding the isolationism that still characterises schools, the persistent shortage of time, and the continuing air of competitiveness among teachers, when they begin to internalise the rationale and intent of mutually supportive processes like clinical supervision, while moving beyond the rhetoric and actually adopting action, then this is an enormously encouraging sign. We are getting closer to the ideal espoused by Eisner (1978):

> I would like one day to see schools in which teachers can function as professional colleagues, where part of their professional role was to visit the classrooms of their colleagues, and to observe and share with them in a supportive, informative and useful way what they have seen. Less professional isolation and more professional communication might go a long way to help all teachers secure more distance and hence to better understand their own teaching. (p. 622)

Conclusion

In this paper I started out by highlighting the fact that school change is not the rational deliberate process that some people would have us believe. One of the realities of schooling is that teachers possess their own theories about what they do, what is reasonable, feasible and possible in classroom teaching. This is invariably knowledge based upon 'lived experiences', rather than the wisdom of outside 'experts'. Far too little regard seems to have been paid in the past by school authorities to workable ways in which teachers can and do use colleagues as important and valued resource persons. Recent studies suggest that teachers do learn from their individual and collective experiences, and are able to share their expertise among themselves when they engage in "frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice" (Little, 1982, p. 331). The idea of teachers acting in critical, reflective and responsive ways about their own teaching is gaining increasing acceptance as teachers begin to see the inherent possibilities in developing shared or collaborative frameworks of meaning about teaching.

In the current context of the move towards teachers acquiring increasing control over their own classroom practice, clinical supervision is increasingly being seen as a viable means. The non-evaluative and genuinely collaborative intent of clinical supervision enables teachers working together

in a consultative relationship to gain data-based insights that were difficult under normal conditions of classroom isolation, and certainly impossible where the strategy was used as a thinly disguised form of inspection and quality control. While clinical supervision will no doubt continue to be used in some quarters as a way of not so subtly controlling teachers, the most exciting possibilities are likely to occur in those situations where teachers are able to use the process to gain a window on their own teaching and in the process to arrive at an understanding of what it means to engage in truly emancipatory learning.

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